

Claims

1. A method of analysing an image comprising performing a Hough transform on points in an image space to an n-dimensional Hough space, selecting points in the Hough space representing features in the image space, and analysing m of the n variables for the selected points, where m is less than n, to derive information about the features in the image space.
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2. A method as claimed in claim 1 comprising detecting points for the Hough transform using feature detecting means such as edge or corner detecting means or colour feature detecting means.
- 10 3. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the analysis of the m variables for the selected points involves analysing relationships between the selected points.
4. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the Hough transform is for detecting lines and maps a point (x,y) in image space to points (r, θ) in Hough space.
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5. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein the analysis of the selected points involves analysing the values of θ.
6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the step of selecting points in the Hough space involves identifying local peaks and comparing the local peaks with a threshold.
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7. A method as claimed in claim 6 wherein the threshold is based on random reference images, preferably having similar statistical properties to the image being analysed.
8. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the analysis of the selected points is for identifying man-made structures and/or for distinguishing between urban/non-urban areas.
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9. A method of generating a threshold for identifying features in a subject image using the Hough transform, the method comprising generating a plurality of random reference image regions, for each reference image region performing a Hough transform and deriving a histogram of accumulated
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values in Hough space, combining the histograms for the reference images, and using the combined histograms to derive a threshold.

10. A method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the reference image regions have similar statistical properties to the subject image.

5 11. A computer program for executing a method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 10.

12. A computer-readable medium storing a computer program as claimed in claim 11.

10 13. Apparatus adapted to perform a method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9.

14. Apparatus as claimed in claim 13 comprising means for processing image signals, means for performing a Hough transform, means for selecting points in the Hough space representing features in the image space, and means for analysing m of the n variables for the selected points, where m is less than n , for information about the features in the image space.

15 15. Apparatus as claimed in claim 13 or claim 14 comprising image input means.

16. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 15 comprising image display means.